

peasants, barely raised above animality; and a
drama of
savage greed and egotism is unfolded around
him. Old
Fouan, being no longer able to till his fields
himself, divides
his property among Ms children, who agree to
make him
an allowance. But he is cheated, ill-treated,
robbed of his
savings by them, and finally murdered by one
of his sons.
That same son, Buteau, is consumed by a
ravenous earth-
hunger, but animal desire is also strong within
him. He is
both enamoured and jealous of his wife's sister,
Frangoise,
who is Jean Macquart's wife, his passion for
her being
blended with a craving to appropriate her
land. At last
she, by violence, becomes his victim, and in a
struggle with
her sister, who is present, is thrown upon a
scythe and
mortally injured. That crime is witnessed by
old Fouan,
and it is for fear lest he should reveal it that he
is stifled—
then burnt.

From "La Terre" Jean Macquart passes to "La
DÉBACLE"
(XIX), for the time has now come for the great
smash-up
of that Empire all tinsel without and all
rottenness within.
War and invasion descend upon France. You
follow the
retreating soldiers from the Rhine to the Me
use, on that
terrible, woeful march to Sedan, where all
becomes disaster.
You see the wretched Emperor borne along in
the baggage
train of his army, carried, it was thought, to
certain death
in the hope that France might then forgive,

and allow his
son to reign. And you see him under fire, vainly
courting
death, which will not take him. Then the
horrors of
Bazeilles, the struggle for the Calvary, the
great charge, the
hoisting of the white flag, the truce, and the
abject surrender
follow in swift succession, Next comes the
battlefield after
the slaughter, with the dreadful Camp of
Misery, and later,